

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



Topographic or Assessor's Map



Recorded by: Julie Ann Larry

Organization: ttl-architects

Date (month / year): March 2010

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

98 89

Town: Tewksbury

Place: (*neighborhood or village*)

Address: 721 Shawsheen Street

Historic Name: Abel Mears House

Uses: Present: Single Family Residential

Original: Single Family Residential

Date of Construction: 1794-1817

Source: Vital Records

Style/Form: Federal

Architect/Builder:

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Granite

Wall/Trim: Wood Shingles

Roof: Asphalt Shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Additions (c1860)

Windows (1960s)

Condition: Fair

Moved: no | X | yes | | **Date** _____

Acreage: 0.24 Acres

Setting: Located in a formerly rural area developed in the second half of the 20th century as a suburban residential area.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

Tewksbury

721 Shawsheen Street

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Area(s) Form No.

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___ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The five by one bay house at **721 Shawsheen Street** is two-and-a-half stories in height. The rectangular dwelling rests on a granite foundation. The main facade faces south and is not orientated toward Shawsheen Street. A one-story addition projects from the rear (north) of the dwelling and a one-and-a-half story ell projects from the east. Two brick chimney pierces northern slope of the side gable roof. The roof is sheathed asphalt shingles. The walls of the house are clad in wood shingles. Corner trim is quoins. Large dentil molding is located below the pediment trim. An entrance on the west facade of the rear addition features a simple six panel wood door topped by a triangular pediment. An entrance on the south facade of the main house features a projecting gable front entry addition. A copper bay window on the west facade features a multipaned fixed window flanked by 1/1 sash windows. Directly above is a tripartite window comprised of a large 1/1 sash window flanked by short and narrow 1/1 sash windows. Other windows include: sash windows, arch top windows, and multipane patio doors.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

The narrow Federal house was owned in the early 19th century by Abel Mears. Mears, a farmer, was the son of Russell & Susan [Dutton] Mears. The Abel Mears grandfather Robert (1695-1784) first settled in Tewksbury in the early 18th century, probably c1738 when his son Thomas was born. Abel's father Russell, was born in 1766 to Robert and his third wife Rebeckah. Russell Mears married in 1794 to Susan Dutton. Abel was born the following year.

Abel Mears married his wife Hannah in 1817. Given the Federal style of the house is likely that the house was either built by Abel c1817 or by his father Russell c1794. Additional deed research would be necessary to determine if Abel acquired the farm and house from his father.

Abel's wife died in 1860 and he died in 1861. That year his heirs Abel W and Charles H Mears sold the farm to Daniel Johnson. Daniel Johnson sold the farm in 1869 to Dennis Collins, an Irish immigrant.

Dennis Collins (c1833-1898) came to the United States in 1854. He married his wife Ellen in 1858. They had twelve children, but only four lived as long as their parents: Joseph, Elizabeth [Lizzie], Nellie, and Mary A. Nellie and Mary Collins never married. Nellie worked as a matron and laundress at the Tewksbury State Hospital. Mary worked as a bookkeeper. The daughters lived with their mother after their father's death in 1910 and remained in the house after her death 1919-1931. Nellie Collins died 1949-1951.

The Mears and Collins farm was approximately 30 acres. It was associated with an additional 4-acre parcel known as the swamp or logging lot. The farm included a barn, where in 1890 Dennis Collins kept a horse, two cows, 2 heifers, and a pig. The farm stretched from Shawsheen Street south to the Shawsheen River between the farms of Peter Clark and Peter Shedd. In 1956, Edward Latour, the heir of Nellie and Mary's sister Elizabeth Collins Latour sold the farm to Thomas S Montgomery from Winthrop, MA. In 1956 the 30-acre farm was subdivided and the lots immediately along Shawsheen Street were developed. The interior lots and the roads laid out to connect to the adjacent Riverview subdivision in the 1956 plan were never fully developed or sold by Montgomery. The interior parcel was subdivided in 1980 for residential development as well as 7-acres of open space that connect to the river.

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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Additional owners include: Walter J Riley, a real estate insurance businessman and his wife Rita who further subdivided the farm (1956-1959); and Paul & Mary O'Loughlin (1959-2009). Mary is the current resident.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

U.S. Census Records. 1790-1930.

Directories. 1896-97, 1898-99, 1900-01, 1911-12, 1913-14, 1915-16, 1919, 1927, 1930-31, 1932-33, 1937-38, 1940-41, 1942-1943, 1949 [Ancestry], 1953, 1955, 1961, and 1967.

Map of the Town of Tewksbury 1852. Henry F Walling. Boston, MA.

1865 Map of Tewkesbury with inset.

Atlas of Middlesex County 1875. FW Beers.

Atlas of Middlesex County 1889. Geo H Walker & Co.

List of Residents by Streets, Ages 17 years and over, In the Town of Tewksbury Mass. As prepared by the Board of Registrars (various years 1965-)

Valuations of the Real and Personal Estate of the Town of Tewksbury.

North Middlesex County Registry of Deeds.

_____. *Ye Towne Book*. Town of Tewksbury. 1934.

Patton, Harold J. *Ask Now of the Days that are Past*. Higginson Book Co. 1964.

